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ABSTRACT

The Florida Council on Teacher Education (COTE) planned and conducted statewide involvement studies to determine competencies that are essential and acceptable to the profession. This included systematic involvement procedures for gaining professional agreement on identification, assessment, implementation, and other development and research on teaching competencies. Florida COTE held an invitational involvement conference with approximately 200 representatives from statewide organizations of teachers, administrators, and lay persons to determine ways that twenty-three identified competencies might be included in state policy on preservice and inservice teacher education and certification. COTE drafted five recommendations to the Florida Commissioner of Education in January 1976 that would facilitate implementation. This first step lays the groundwork for professional organizations, teacher training institutions, and others to develop more effective training programs and assessment strategies for competencies already accepted by professional educators. (DMT)

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Improving Teaching Effectiveness: Florida Essential Competency Studies

by: Garfield Wilson

Dissatisfaction with the amount and rate of pupil learning seems to be increasing at a phenomenal rate in the past few years. Not only are parents, school boards, legislators, and others expressing this dissatisfaction but professional educators are concerned and searching for ways to increase pupil learning by improving teaching effectiveness.

One approach recommended by representatives of the organized teaching profession and supported by Commissioner of Education Ralph Turlington, is to provide greater specificity to the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for effective teaching.

Traditionally, educators have been certified on the basis of inferred competency from courses taken and degrees conferred by colleges and universities. Courses and degrees have varied significantly over the years between the various colleges and universities. Yet, when the courses are counted for certification they are treated as if they are equal in content and quality.

More specific guidelines for the content of courses and programs that prepare teachers, principals, counselors, etc., are needed to assure that they have studied specific competencies necessary for effective teaching and learning.

Immediately after Ralph Turlington assumed the office of Commissioner of Education in 1975, he asked the Florida Council on Teacher Education (COTE) to plan and conduct statewide involvement studies to determine competencies that are essential and acceptable to the profession.

COTE planned and conducted the first phase of the studies in 1975. It was designed to identify those basic and essential competencies and evaluation systems that are essential and acceptable to classroom teachers and all other certificated personnel in Florida. The Council on Teacher Education's plan for conducting the first phase of the essential competency studies included systematic involvement procedures for gaining professional agreement on identification, acceptance, assessment, implementation, and other development and research on the competencies.

This phase of the study resulted in the acceptance of twenty-three competencies necessary for effective classroom teaching. COTE refers to the twenty-three essential competencies as the knowledge and skills essential for teaching irrespective of subject matter or age of pupils. No reference is intended to any particular way of organizing learning experiences for achievement of these competencies (i.e., competency based teacher education or any other designated curriculum form).

Dr. Wilson serves as Director of Teacher Education Program Approval in the Florida Department of Education and Administrator for the Florida Council on Teacher Education.

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In November, 1975, COTE held an invitational involvement conference with approximately 200 representatives from statewide organizations of teachers, administrators, and lay persons to determine ways that the twenty-three essential competencies might be included in state policy on preservice and inservice teacher education and certification. Data from the first phase of the essential competency study and the statewide involvement conference was used by COTE to develop the following recommendations to the Commissioner of Education in January, 1976:

1. That the twenty-three competencies identified as essential for effective classroom teaching be included in State Board of Education Rules that govern preservice teacher education program approval.

2. That the twenty-three essential competencies be included in State Board of Education Rules on inservice teacher education to insure that district inservice master plans include provisions for certificated personnel to master these competencies.

3. That statewide professional organizations be requested to consider and recommend additional strategies for the utilization of the twenty-three competencies to improve teaching effectiveness.

4. That research and development activities be conducted to validate various training and assessment strategies for the twenty-three essential competencies.

5. That similar involvement studies be conducted in each specialization area to identify and gain professional acceptance for additional competencies that are essential for effective classroom teaching or essential to support effective classroom teaching in given subjects or grade levels.

Commissioner Turlington accepted the recommendations and directed that necessary changes in state policy be made to insure the use of the twenty-three competencies as basic content criteria for approval of preservice and inservice teacher education programs. The recommended specialization competency studies are being planned by the Department of Education and three state funded research and development projects have been approved to validate various training and assessment strategies for the twenty-three competencies.

The essential competency studies are viewed by the Council on Teacher Education as a process for improving teaching effectiveness. Gaining professional consensus on the essential competencies and getting them into state policy is an important first step. This first step lays the ground work for professional organizations, teacher training institutions, school districts, and others to develop more effective training programs and assessment strategies for competencies that have been accepted by professional educators as essential for effective teaching and learning.

Attachment: Florida's 23 Essential Generic Competencies

Florida's 23 Essential Generic Competencies

Communications Skills

1. Demonstrate the ability to orally communicate information on a given topic in a coherent and logical manner.
2. Demonstrate the ability to write in a logical easily understood style with appropriate grammar and sentence structure.
3. Demonstrate the ability to comprehend and interpret a message after listening.
4. Demonstrate the ability to read, comprehend, and interpret professional material.

Basic General Knowledge

5. Demonstrate the ability to add, subtract, and multiply, and divide.
6. Demonstrate an awareness of patterns of physical and social development in students.

Technical Skills

7. Diagnose the entry knowledge and/or skill of students for a given set of instructional objectives using diagnostic tests, teacher observations, and student records.
8. Identify long-range goals for a given subject area.
9. Construct and sequence related short-range objectives for a given subject area.
10. Select, adapt, and/or develop instructional materials for a given set of instructional objectives and student learning needs.
11. Select/develop and sequence related learning activities appropriate for a given set of instructional objectives and student learning needs.
12. Establish rapport with students in the classroom by using verbal and/or visual motivational devices.
13. Present directions for carrying out an instructional activity.
14. Construct or assemble a classroom test to measure student performance according to criteria based upon objectives.

Administrative Skills

15. Establish a set of classroom routines and procedures for utilization of materials and physical movement.
16. Formulate a standard for student behavior in the classroom.
17. Identify causes of classroom misbehavior and employ a technique(s) for correcting it.
18. Identify and/or develop a system for keeping records of class and individual student progress.

Interpersonal Skills

19. Counsel with students both individually and collectively concerning their academic needs.

20. Identify and/or demonstrate behaviors which reflect a feeling for the dignity and worth of other people including those from other ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and economic groups.

21. Demonstrate instructional and social skills which assist students in developing a positive self-concept.

22. Demonstrate instructional and social skills which assist students in interacting constructively with their peers.

23. Demonstrate teaching skills which assist students in developing their own values, attitudes, and beliefs.